

INSURE MONTANA

Insuring Montanans one small business at a time

RENEWAL APPLICATION PROCESS

Montana law requires businesses participating in Insure Montana to complete an annual renewal process in the month of October. The Insure Montana program will begin to accept applications on October 1st and stop receiving applications on October 31st.

Last year's renewal process was conducted on-line through a web-based application. In 2010, the on-line application will be available to access via the State of Montana's e-Pass system.

Instructions will be provided to currently participating businesses and employees the last week of September. The instructions will include information on how to access the Insure Montana renewal application through the State of Montana e-Pass system.

Secondly, a logon ID and a user sensitive unique password for the Insure Montana renewal application will be provided. Businesses and employees will be provided with further instructions on how to complete the process once they have logged on to the secure website.

What you need to know about on-line renewal applications:

- **On-line renewal applications cannot be accessed until October 1, 2010.**
- **On-line renewal applications must be submitted no later than October 31, 2010.**
- **Once the on-line renewal application has been completed, the business/employee will receive a confirmation number. The confirmation number page can be printed; however, *please do not fax or mail the page to the Insure Montana office.***
- **All employees enrolled in the business' group health insurance must complete an employee renewal application. (*Does not apply to the tax credit program.*)**

Businesses or employees without access to the Internet are encouraged to contact their insurance agent who can assist with completion of an on-line renewal application.

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

As the Commissioner of Securities and Insurance, I have selected a group of professionals, legislators, advocates and Insure Montana participants to form an Insure Montana Advisory Council. I have asked this Council to examine Insure Montana and provide me with recommendations on how to improve the program. The Council has asked that a survey be provided to the program's Purchasing Pool participating businesses. This survey will be communicated to the Purchasing Pool businesses via e-mail and will be available to complete online through **September 3, 2010**. Please take a few minutes from your busy schedule to provide input for improving the Insure Montana program by completing this survey.

Although this survey is limited to the Purchasing Pool businesses and only available for a short period of time, I am always open to suggestions regarding the Insure Montana Purchasing Pool and Tax Credit programs. You can contact my office by telephone at (800) 332-6148 or (406) 444-2040 or by e-mail at insuremt@mt.gov.



Monica J. Lindeen

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HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN OPTIONS

Businesses participating in the Purchasing Pool program can choose from an assortment of group health insurance plans and can provide coverage that best fits the needs of their employees.

The Insure Montana Purchasing Pool provides three different levels of plans:

1. A Premier Plan with a \$750 deductible
2. Standard Plan with a \$1,500 deductible
3. A Comprehensive Major Medical Plan with a \$2,700 deductible and a Health Savings Account option

(All three plans include a dental benefit.)

Businesses can also purchase group health insurance through one of the following Qualified Association Plans (QAP):

- Montana Nonprofit Association
- State Bar of Montana
- Montana Chamber Choices
- Montana Logging Association
- Western Petroleum Marketers Association
- Montana Retailers Association
- National Federation of Independent Business
- Montana Building Industry Association
- Employer's Association of Western Montana
- Montana Automobile Dealers Association

Each QAP offers a variety of plans, with a range of premium costs, deductibles and coverage. Contact information can be found on the Insure Montana website at: <http://csi.mt.gov/InsureMontana/qualified.asp>.

FEDERAL HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM

The new federal health reform law provides a Small Business Tax Credit to businesses to contribute toward their employees' health premiums beginning with the 2010 tax year. The credit applies to all amounts paid or incurred in taxable years beginning January 1, 2010.

To qualify, a business must have fewer than 25 full-time equivalent employees (FTE) and average annual wages less than \$50,000 per employee. According to the IRS, "because the eligibility formula is based in part on the number of FTEs, not the number of employees, many businesses will qualify even if they employ more than 25 individual workers."

To receive the tax credit, an employer must have a group health plan and must pay at least 50% of the premium.

For more information contact the IRS Health Coverage Tax Credit website at www.irs.gov/hctc or call 1-866-628-4282.

Small businesses that participate in the Insure Montana Program are also eligible to receive a federal small business tax credit.

The tax credit is not available for coverage for working owners and their immediate families or seasonal workers who work 120 or fewer days.

The Small Business Tax Credit is part of the "general business credit," which reduces the income taxes a business owes. If the credit is more than taxes owed, the unused credit can be carried forward or back to other years that a business has a tax liability. Tax-exempt small businesses may apply the credit to their payroll taxes.

**To learn more, visit
www.csi.mt.gov or
call 800-332-6148.**